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01/11/2011 Minutes

VISION 2020 STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2011 MEETING

In attendance: Paul Bayer, Andrew Fischer, Bruce Fitzsimmons, Joey Glushko, Mary Harrison, Jane Howard, Gordon Jamieson, Elizabeth Karpati, Josh Lobel, Gail McCormick; State Representative Sean Garballey.

The minutes of the November 30 meeting were accepted with one correction.

Census Survey:

Samples of the survey were distributed. It will be mailed out shortly, to 19,159 addresses this year vs. about 18,700 last year. Posters asking for responses will be put up in businesses. Sean will send a reminder to his e-mail list and ask his two colleagues to do likewise. Gordon offered to write an item for the Arlington Advocate.

Open Meeting Law discussion with Sean Garballey:

The law came out of the ethics reform bill; it was prompted by violations at the state level but it also covers the state's 351 municipalities.

Points made in the discussion: The law should apply to elected or appointed officials, not to advisory committees. It should differentiate between deliberation that is aimed at coming to a decision, and exchange of ideas, aimed at clarifying one's thinking, preceding such discussion; only the former should have to be public.

Sean agreed to talk to the Attorney General's office and then draft an amendment to the law and to share his proposal with us.

Sean and Will Brownsberger are also planning to submit a bill to create a task force to recommend ways to rein in special education costs.

The local aid formula was changed in fiscal year 2002 in a way that made things worse for Arlington. The Governor is trying to change it to help communities that were hurt in FY'02. Sean is discussing with the Town Manager and others how to improve it still further.

Other business:

The Diversity Task Group is planning an orientation session on how to run for and serve in Town Meeting. Jane will try to get the Moderator to participate.

Vision 2020 needs leadership for the Governance Task Group and the Reservoir committee.

Discussion on a proposal for a single annual reserve fund from which money could be doled out to different departments as unexpected needs arise, vs. somewhat larger initial appropriations to these departments, was inconclusive. Gordon will take the idea to the Fiscal Resources task group.

Vision 2020 has been asked to participate in the EcoFest on March 26.

Topics for next meeting: Task group reports and early census survey returns.